

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-24. (cancelled)

25. (new) A device for connecting a first terminal portion of a pipe element and a second terminal portion of a pipe element, comprising:

a seal between an end face of the first terminal portion and an end face of the second terminal portion;

fixing means mounted on the first and second terminal portions and associated thereat with first and second axial abutment means along the first and second terminal portions for holding the first and second terminal portions close together and compressing the seal between end faces of the first and second terminal portions;

wherein the first axial abutment means comprise a first removable bush that is provided with means for axial blocking the first removable bush along the first terminal portion and an outer shoulder on the first terminal portion close to the end face thereof,

wherein the second axial abutment means comprise a second removable bush that is provided with means for axial

blocking the second removable bush along the second terminal portion and an outer shoulder on the second terminal portion close to the end face thereof,

wherein the first and second removable bushes are openable to allow them to be engaged laterally on the corresponding one of the first and second terminal portions and being arranged to cooperate with the outer shoulder thereof, and

wherein the fixing means comprises snap-fit tabs having one end integral with one of the first and second removable bushes and an opposing end that extends axially beyond the end face of the corresponding one of the first and second terminal portions and that is arranged to grip the other of said first and second removable bushes.

26. (new) The device of claim 25, wherein an outside diameter of the first and second removable bushes is at least equal to an outside diameter of the outer shoulders of the first and second terminal portions, and

wherein the fixing means further comprise a threaded tubular section and a tapped tubular section that are each integral with a respective ring mounted on one of the first and second removable bushes such that the first and second removable bushes form axial abutments for the rings, at least one of the threaded and tapped tubular sections extending beyond the end face of the one of the first and second terminal portion on which

it is mounted for engagement on the other tubular section when the rings are abutted on the first and second removable bushes.

27. (new) The device of claim 25, wherein one of the first and second removable bushes comprises a portion arranged to extend beyond the end face of the corresponding one of the first and second terminal portions when the respective bush is abutted against the outer shoulder of the respective terminal portion and to ensure positioning of the seal facing the end face.

28. (new) A device for connecting a first terminal portion of a pipe element and a second terminal portion of a pipe element, comprising:

a seal between an end face of the first terminal portion and an end face of the second terminal portion;

fixing means mounted on the first and second terminal portions and associated thereat with first and second axial abutment means along the first and second terminal portions for holding the first and second terminal portions close together and compressing the seal between end faces of the first and second terminal portions;

wherein the first axial abutment means comprise an outer shoulder on the first terminal portion close to the end face thereof,

wherein the second axial abutment means comprise a removable bush that is provided with means for axial blocking the

removable bush along the second terminal portion, the removable bush being radially deformable and having an outer surface having a tapered portion, and

wherein the fixing means is integral with first and second rings mounted respectively on the first and second terminal portions, the first ring having a shoulder cooperating with the outer shoulder of the first terminal portion and the second ring having an internal tapered surface cooperating with the tapered portion of the removable bush, and constituting means for clamping the removable bush on the second terminal portion, the removable bush having a projecting inner surface from which at least one clip extends.

29. (new) A device for connecting a first terminal portion of a pipe element and a second terminal portion of a pipe element, comprising:

a seal between an end face of the first terminal portion and an end face of the second terminal portion;

fixing means mounted on the first and second terminal portions and associated thereat with first and second axial abutment means along the first and second terminal portions for holding the first and second terminal portions close together and compressing the seal between end faces of the first and second terminal portions;

wherein the first axial abutment means comprise an outer shoulder on the first terminal portion close to the end face thereof,

wherein the second axial abutment means comprise a removable bush that is provided with means for axial blocking the removable bush along the second terminal portion, the removable bush being radially deformable and having an outer surface having a tapered portion,

wherein the fixing means is integral with first and second rings mounted respectively on the first and second terminal portions, the first ring having a shoulder cooperating with the outer shoulder of the first terminal portion and the second ring having an internal tapered surface cooperating with the tapered portion of the removable bush, and constituting means for clamping the removable bush on the second terminal portion, and wherein the inner and outer tubular sections diverge when the seal is not compressed,

wherein the seal comprises an outer tubular section to overlap the second terminal portion and an adjacent annular section projecting inwardly of the outer tubular section to cover the end face of the second terminal portion,

wherein the seal comprises an inner tubular section extending from the adjacent annular section facing the outer tubular section, and

wherein the seal comprises a rigid L-shaped reinforcing frame insert extending within the adjacent annular section and the inner tubular section to flatten the inner tubular section against an inner surface of the second terminal portion when the seal is compressed between the first and second terminal portions.

30. (new) The device of claim 29, wherein the outer shoulder comprises a surface of a flange.

31. (new) The device of claim 25, wherein the outer shoulders of the first and second terminal portions each comprises a surface of a flange.

32. (new) The device of claim 28, wherein the outer shoulder comprises a surface of a flange.

33. (new) The device of claim 25, wherein the seal comprises means for electrical conduction between the first and second terminal portions.

34. (new) The device of claim 28, wherein the seal comprises means for electrical conduction between the first and second terminal portions.

35. (new) The device of claim 29, wherein the seal comprises means for electrical conduction between the first and second terminal portions.